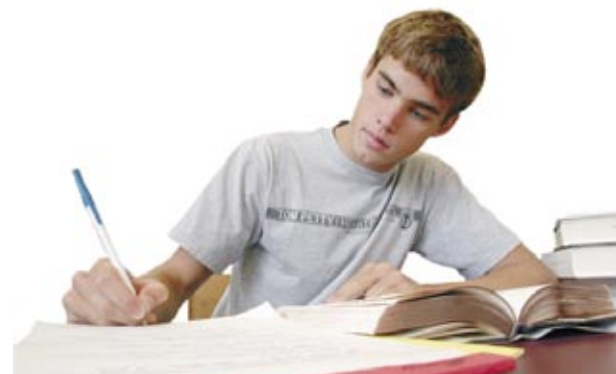


Kentucky Teacher

October 2003

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

www.kentuckyschools.org



One teacher's quest for Rank I leads to gold mine of resources



Kim Downs puts into practice some of the skills she acquired through Kentucky's Continuing Education Option Program as she teaches the concept of even and odd numbers to primary students Landon Coomer, left, and Tony Polo.

By Kim Downs

Teacher, Colonel William Casey Elementary School (Adair County)

Three years ago, I began to explore options for obtaining my Rank I certification. My search engine led me to the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site (www.kentuckyschools.org), where I first learned about Kentucky's Continuing Education Option (CEO) Program.

Nobody I knew had ever strayed from the traditional track of enrolling in a college or university graduate program for achieving certification. However, in my quest for Rank I, I needed more than attending classes, writing papers and taking exams. I wanted something that would help me become a better teacher and equip me with new instructional strategies and ideas.

I contacted the Education Professional Standards Board and learned that a CEO cohort group would be formed in the Green River Regional Educational Cooperative service area during the summer of 2002. I

attended meetings to learn about the program and to see if it was for me. At the meetings, I heard from past CEO participants and gained a lot of insight about their experiences. I met cohort leaders who would serve as my support staff as I worked toward my Rank I certification.

Through the CEO Program, I developed my own professional development plan based on three factors: content area, instructional strategies and leadership growth. After analyzing my school's assessment and accountability data, the Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools and Kentucky Core Content, I realized there was a need to improve mathematics instruction in my classroom and school.

I attended the Kentucky Council of Teachers of Mathematics Fall 2002 Conference, which motivated me to use a hands-on instructional approach to teach the concepts, skills and relationships of the

See **ONE** on Page 9

Lawmakers review state accountability system

By Cathy Lindsey

clindsey@kde.state.ky.us

Results of a yearlong study of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS), including recommendations from the Kentucky Legislature's Program Review and Investigations Committee were released in an August report.

The National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability (NTAPAA) determined there is significant evidence to support the "validity and reliability" of the Kentucky Core Content Tests and CATS as a basis for rewarding or identifying for improvement schools and districts as outlined in current state laws.

NTAPAA is a panel of national testing experts appointed by the legislature to advise the General Assembly and Kentucky Board of Education on testing and accountability issues.

The report also weighed in on the question of why statewide See **LAWMAKERS** on Page 10

More reading strategies for middle and high school teachers

By Cathy Lindsey

clindsey@kde.state.ky.us

It's no secret that teachers who develop reading strategies can enhance a student's learning across the board. Now, a new professional development tool is on the way to help middle and high

school teachers achieve this goal.

"More Reading Strategies in Action" (MRSIA) showcases videotaped examples of exceptional teachers modeling strategies that help students improve their understanding of informational texts. The collection of profes-

sional development resources is available on CD-ROM.

"I believe it is important for students to become familiar with 'different ways of learning' in every classroom and to experience similar strategies

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Welcome to the "new" Kentucky Teacher

If you're a regular reader of *Kentucky Teacher*, you've already noticed major changes in this month's issue. And you may be wondering why.

This year, our printing contract - which determines the specifications for the publication - expired. That gave us the opportunity to redesign *Kentucky Teacher* in an attempt to make it more attractive and more reader friendly.

We were pleasantly surprised that the

changes you see here in paper grade, size and use of color photos could be made at no additional cost. And we hope you are pleased with these cosmetic changes.

Although our "look" has changed, our aim remains the same: Providing you with useful information to improve your instruction and help you reach the statewide goal of Proficiency by 2014.

A less obvious change is the appointment of our new editor, Faun S. Fishback, and a new writer, Cathy Lindsey. Faun is a veteran journalist and has written for *Kentucky Teacher* for the past seven years. Cathy is a newcomer to the department and a recent journalism

graduate from the University of Kentucky.

I encourage you to contact Faun, Cathy or Joy Barr, our other writer, at any time. You'll find their by-lines and e-mail addresses throughout the publication. You can also contact us at kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us. Or, if you prefer, contact me directly by phone at (502) 564-3421 or by e-mail at aarrasti@kde.state.ky.us. We'd love to hear from you.

Thanks for all you do — every day — to educate "our" children!

Armando Arrastia, Director
Division of Publications & Web Services

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Bulletin Board



Events

Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference

March 4-6, 2004

Plan now to send a team of teachers and administrators from your school to take advantage of all the professional development opportunities at the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference. Check the KTLC Web site for information about the conference or to make hotel reservations. On the Web: www.kentuckytlc.org

Environmental education facilitator training

Become a facilitator for both Project Food, Land & People (FLP) and Project Water Education for Teachers (WET), two nationally known agricultural and environmental education programs, by attending a two-day workshop Oct. 23 and 24 at the University of Kentucky Arboretum in Lexington. Cost of the workshop is \$50. Participants will receive activity and curriculum guides for both education programs. Contact: Rayetta Boone, (502) 564-4696, rayetta.boone@kyagr.com or Jennifer Lynn, (859) 289-5308, jlynn@uky.edu

Kentucky Book Fair

Nov. 8
Farnham Dudgeon Civic Center,
Frankfort
On the Web: www.kdla.net/kybookfair.htm
Contact: Connie Crowe, (502) 564-8300,
kybookfair@ky.gov

Children's Theatre

Upcoming performances:

- Tales of Edgar Allen Poe (Oct. 26 and 28-31, Nov. 1-3 and 7)
- Fool of the World (Nov. 16 and 18-23)
- Merry Christmas, Strega Nona (Nov. 30, Dec. 1-10)

On the Web: www.lctonstage.org
Contact: Box office for group rates and performance times, (859) 254-4546

Commonwealth Cleanup Week

March 21-27, 2004

This event focuses on the importance of responsible solid waste practices. Teacher materials are available online. Feb. 2, 2004, is the deadline for a student poster contest. On the Web: www.waste.ky.gov/ccw/cleanuphome.htm
Contact: Matt Hackathorn, (502) 564-6716,
Matthew.Hackathorn@mail.state.ky.us

Resources

Fulbright Teacher Program in Japan

The Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program selects primary and secondary school teachers and administrators to participate in a fully funded three-week study visit to Japan. The application deadline is Dec. 10.
On the Web: www.iie.org/pgms/fmf
Contact: Rebecca Schendel, (888) 527-2636, RSchendel@iie.org

Fan mail to soldiers

Many educators have students write cards and letters to military personnel at home and abroad as part of their classroom instruction. The Christmas Fan Mail for the Troops campaign distributes mail to U.S. soldiers stationed throughout the world.
On the Web: www.troopfanmail.net
Contact: Friends of Our Troops, PO Box 65408, Fayetteville, NC 28306.

Sexual abuse resource

A new Kentucky-based video and resource booklet, "Promise Not to Tell? A Teacher's Guide to Recognizing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse" will be sent to all Kentucky public schools. The Kentucky Department of Education and other state agencies and community groups developed these resources. For additional copies, contact Peggy Washington, Division of Student, Family, Community Support Services, (502) 564-3678, pwashing@kde.state.ky.us

Mathematics/Science proposals sought

The Kentucky Department of Education seeks proposals from scientists, mathematicians and engineers from institutions of higher learning to partner with high-needs schools and districts with the goal of improving mathematics and science instruction through tiered mentoring or alternative certification.
Contact: Rhonda Bailey, (502) 564-2979, rbailey@kde.state.ky.us

About the presidents

An online tour of the White House, biographical information about the president and vice president, games and quizzes are available online. Special features on U.S. presidents and life in the White House are included. A teacher guide is available.
On the Web: www.whitehouse.gov/kids/

Teach about water

The Kentucky Environmental Education Council and Eastern Kentucky PRIDE have published four units of study on water for grades K-12. All units are interdisciplinary and are standards based.
Contact: Jane Eller, (800) 882-5271, jeller@kde.state.ky.us

Future City Competition

Kentucky middle school students are being challenged to use plastics to improve the lives of senior citizens as part of the 2004 National Engineers Week Future City Competition. The competition encourages interest in mathematics, science and engineering through hands-on applications. Registration deadline for Kentucky school groups is Oct. 15.
On the Web: www.futurecity.org
Contact: Diana Anderson, (606) 337-4386, danderson@pineville.k12.ky.us

Prudential Spirit of Community Awards

Oct. 31 is the deadline for students in grades 5-12 to submit applications to the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program. The program recognizes young people who through volunteer activities are making their communities better places to live.
Web site: www.principals.org/awards/prudential.cfm
Contact: (800) 253-7746, Ext. 324, spirit@principals.org

Conference Connection

Kentucky Science Teachers' meeting

Nov. 6-8
Hyatt Regency, Lexington
On the Web: www.ksta.org/
Contact: Shawn Sizemore, (606) 862-4745, Ssizemore@laurel.k12.ky.us

Safe Schools Conference

Nov. 10-11
Galt House, Louisville
On the Web: www.ksba.org
Contact: Kerri Schelling, (800) 372-2962, kschelling@mail.state.ky.us

Bulletin Board is compiled by Joy Barr
jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

Commissioner's Comments

State and federal accountability rests on CATS data

By Gene Wilhoit, Commissioner
gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us

October is an important month for Kentucky education. On Oct. 7, test scores from last year's Kentucky Core Content Tests will be released. With the reporting of this component of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS), schools will get reliable mid-accountability-cycle data that tell them two things:

- How well schools are teaching Kentucky's core content
- How well schools are progressing toward the state goal of proficiency and beyond by 2014

This fall's state test score release marks the first time that CATS data will be used to calculate school progress for the relatively new federal education law, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The Kentucky Board of Education at its August meeting approved a blended accountability system that uses school and district CATS data to meet both state and federal accountability requirements. School results for federal accountability will be released Oct. 14.

The No Child Left Behind Act requires Kentucky and all other states to calculate this additional federal accountability. One of the main new requirements of the act is reporting Adequate Yearly Progress for all groups of students in all schools in the content areas of reading and mathematics.

In several ways this reporting is similar to what Kentucky does already when it provides schools and districts with disaggregated data from all seven content areas we test. Schools use the disaggregated data to find out if "achievement gaps" between certain groups of students exist and then plan strategies to eliminate the gaps. Disaggregated data makes it impossible for schools to hide the fact that all their students are not moving at the same pace toward proficiency.

Even schools with high accountability indices — schools the public has long thought are doing just fine — may have some disturbing disparities. Some high-performing schools found that out earlier this year as they looked at school data as part of their compliance with Senate Bill 168, a state law that requires schools to close achievement gaps between groups of students. These schools found instances where their high performance indices are covering up the fact that children of color, or students in poverty, or students with disabilities, or students whose first language is not English, for example, are not learning as well as the school-wide performance indicates.

Additional federal attention on the achievement of each student group will be eye-opening for many people — educators, parents and community officials alike. It will be a challenge for all schools whose students are not making adequate yearly progress.

However, I believe our schools and districts can use the federal accountability

results as a constructive tool to continue improving student achievement. These schools must give immediate attention to helping their students improve reading and mathematics skills.

I don't want to oversimplify the adequate yearly progress provisions of No Child Left Behind. They are complicated and may cast some of our schools in a less than favorable light.

The main problem is that the federal government is taking a "pass/fail" approach to adequate yearly progress. Schools either hit all of their student group targets or they don't.

I'm afraid there will be a temptation for some Kentuckians to lump all the schools together that don't make their annual yearly progress goals — the ones that miss by a lot and the ones that miss by only a little — and label them "failing schools." This is inaccurate and unfair. It most certainly does not give Kentuckians a good idea of

what is happening in their schools.

These schools are not failures. They are schools "in need of improvement" and will be recognized as such by the department to receive more support in meeting their goal in 2004.

The true failures are those few schools that do not make any sort of progress year after year. Most Kentucky schools do not fall in that category, and I do not want to see them identified with such a negative designation.

Communicating the differences between CATS accountability and No Child Left Behind accountability will be a big challenge for all Kentucky educators. However, we must not allow ourselves to get bogged down in explanations. Our duty to the children of Kentucky is to remain focused on the real work: making sure that all students are mastering the core content and getting the education they deserve.

STLP to the rescue

Throughout the state, members of the Student Technology Leadership Program provide invaluable technical help to schools and districts throughout the school year. Shortly after schools started this year, many STLP members were called on to help clean up problems caused by computer worms and viruses. I want to share one example with you of how Kentucky students are putting their technical skills to work in real-world situations.

When "bugs" hit the Christian County School District's computer system, those folks knew just where to go for help. Lauren Glass, who was the top troubleshooter at the district's Student Technology Leadership Program computer camp last summer, answered the call. The diminutive 5th-grader was instrumental in identifying problems on computers and applying the fix to get those machines functioning properly again.

I want to say a special thanks to all STLP students who use their problem-solving and troubleshooting skills to help their schools and districts.

Loss to education

Education in Kentucky lost a valued friend on Aug. 29 when Highly Skilled Educator Linda Thomas died in an automobile accident. She was returning home to Ashland after a week-long training at Natural Bridge State Resort Park.

Before joining the Highly Skilled Educator Program, Linda taught at Verity Middle School in Ashland. She was serving the staff and children at Inez Middle School in Martin County at the time of her death.

Linda was a special individual who brought kindness and inspiration to those who knew her. She will be missed by family, friends, colleagues and students.



Gathered 'round the computer

Paris Elementary second-year primary student John McKee demonstrates newly acquired technology skills to Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit and classmate Mikayla Mendoza.

Photo by Rick McComb

Clay County students read, read, read so community can celebrate

By Faun S. Fishback

ffishbac@kde.state.ky.us

Like the legendary Brigadoon, the Clay County Reading Celebration appears for only one evening every spring. However, its impact is having a lasting effect: It's helping spawn new readers in this county that has one of the highest rates of functional illiteracy in the nation. It's giving everyone in the community — students and adults — the opportunity to experience the importance of reading. It's rallying the community around literacy.

In the Clay County elementary schools, Commonwealth Accountability Testing System reading indices are up from 65 in 1999 — when the first celebration was held — to 76 in 2002. Writing scores have gone from 34 to 65. Middle school reading and writing scores also have increased. In 2001 and 2002, the district saw its first elementary and middle school distinguished writing portfolios.

In the community, adults have become excited about reading. They support the celebration with thousands of volunteer hours and donations from their businesses. The public library reports a dramatic increase in library card applications during the past five years.

The Reading Celebration recognizes the top 10 readers in each school's Accelerated Reader program. At the first event, top readers had about 100 points for reading books during the school



Photo by Rick McComb

Primary student Dylan Woods concentrates on reading the words to a Backstreet Boys' song on the teleprompter as he sings karaoke at the 2003 Clay County Reading celebration.

year. In 2003, more than 60 students each had in excess of 300 points for reading during the school year. The county's top reader in 2003, Burning Springs Elementary 4th-grader Rachel Burns, had 719.2 points!

Total points from reading

Accelerated Reader books are the criteria for rewarding students at the annual celebration. However, the district's goal is to have all students reading on grade level when they exit primary. That is the goal that drives classroom work to improve read-

ing in Clay County schools. "We work all year long to encourage students to read, read, read in order to showcase our results at the end of the year," said Reecia Samples, supervisor of instruction for Clay County schools.

Eight of the district's nine elementary schools have adopted research-based reading programs. Each elementary school also employs a reading facilitator. Elementary students observe a 90-minute reading block every day during which all certified staff, paraeducators and facilitators work primarily with reading instruction, Samples said. Students also take books home each night to read 20 minutes with their families.

Reading facilitators administer quarterly assessments, chart the data and track student progress. Facilitators also work with students in leveled reading groups and individually. Interventions for struggling students include tutoring and extra services to help them read a variety of print materials. "Some schools assign a reading mentor — either a teacher or older student — to offer encouragement, support and assistance to struggling readers," Samples added.

"We watch for ways that we can help the teachers and the students," said Denva Smith, reading facilitator at Horse Creek Elementary. "Through testing and observation we not only see what areas need improvement but also reasons

to celebrate."

Struggling middle school students participate in reading class. High school teachers help students improve their reading skills through English class activities. "The search is still on to find an engaging program with proven results for older readers who struggle," said Samples.

Library media specialists play a big role in each school's reading program by promoting reading materials specific to grade level and content, Samples added. They develop additional tests on books that incorporate and enrich core content but are not part of the Accelerated Reader program. They also help track students' reading levels, the number of books read and book points earned.

Even Superintendent Douglas Adams and central office staff get involved in the reading initiative. "We go out into the schools, read to students and monitor how the reading programs are going," Adams said. "We think that because children are encouraged to read at school, they will take books home and encourage their mothers and fathers to read to them. Hopefully, it will become part of our culture. In Appalachia, we have a cycle that must be broken. To break that cycle, you've got to begin at the beginning. The beginning, I think, is reading."

Contact: Reecia Samples, (606) 598-2168, rsamples@clay.k12.ky.us

Parents show community the value of reading

By Faun S. Fishback

ffishbac@kde.state.ky.us

The Clay County Reading Celebration began five years ago as a father's answer to his daughter's question, "Why isn't there an awards program for top readers like the events that honor athletes?" Virginia Alley, who was 7 years old at the time, envisioned for her dad a ceremony with prizes for the top readers in Clay County schools and a big party to celebrate reading — with free refreshments — for all families in the community.

Levi Alley liked the idea and pitched it to other parents, teachers, principals and the school board. These adults realized that an event like Virginia described would inspire more children to read and would emphasize the value of reading to the Clay County community.

Creating a community of learners through reading could be a difficult task in a county with a high illiteracy rate. However, a small group of Clay County parents didn't let that stop them. Parents — with Karen Lawson, community education coordinator, as a conduit — got involved in school reading programs. They worked with local businesses for financial support of the celebration and brought the entire community

behind school reading programs.

Today, three members of the Reading Celebration Committee serve on school councils. Committee members visit school libraries, read in classrooms, review school reading scores and are involved in the district's comprehensive planning process, Alley explained.

"We realize that every student, every child in Clay County belongs to us," Alley said. "If I'm going to have a future in Clay County, then I have to invest in them. Our community has come to realize that everything we give our children makes it better for us in the future."

This partnership of educators, community leaders and parents has blossomed into an annual event that transports thousands of Clay County families into the world of books. For one night each spring, a school in the district hosts the event and becomes a wonderland about books.

Each school in the district, led by their library media specialist, decorates a classroom at the host school. Students teach the community about a subject they have studied or a book they have read. They plan activities, games and plays for their rooms. The celebration also features guest authors — many from Appalachia — who talk to students and their families about read-

ing and writing.

The 2003 theme was "Dive into Reading." Several classrooms had beach and water themes. People also could explore mythology, several patriotic themes, "Curious George," Appalachian tales and "Fear Factor." High school students created their own video adaptation of "Clay's Quilt" as part of their classroom study of the Silas House novel. Middle school students dressed as popular storybook characters. Members of the Student Technology Leadership Program recorded the event on video for the local TV station.

Each celebration offers plenty of free refreshments, entertainment and prizes. Family Resources and Youth Service Center directors made certain every child received a free T-shirt and a new book.

"When people leave the celebration, they know that reading is fun," said Alley. "The celebration changes people's preconceived notions about what reading is — especially the parents. Now we don't have kids reading, we have families reading. And, if families are reading, then families are growing."

Contact: Karen Lawson, (606) 598-6102, klawson@clay.k12.ky.us or Levi Alley at (606) 599-0558

Student poetry contest for 2004

Student poets of all ages can compete for prizes and the opportunity to see their poetry published as part of the Kentucky State Poetry Society's 2004 Student Poetry Contest. Entries must be original, unpublished student work and can be written on any subject and in any form. Students may enter only one poem.

Students will compete with their peers in four grade-level categories:

- Through a Child's Eye — Primary (grades 1 and 2)
- On Book Trails — Exiting primary (grade 3) and 4th grade
- On Golden Galleons — Grades 5 and 6
- Junior High Poets — Grades 7 and 8
- High School Poets — Grades 9 through 12

First-, second- and third-place prizes will be awarded in each category. Honorable mentions will be presented at the discretion of the judges.

Deadline for entering the contest is March 15, 2004. Winners will be announced in April. Poems selected for first-place honors will be published in the Prize Poems issue of "Pegasus," the official journal of the Kentucky State Poetry Society. Winning poets will be recognized at the society's fall 2004 poetry convention and invited to read their winning poems.

Contact: A. Carol Scott, (606) 474-2513, tcscott@email.kcc.edu

Make history come alive for students!

The Kentucky Junior Historical Society and National History Day in Kentucky are two programs offered by the Kentucky Historical Society that help spark students' interest in history.

The Kentucky Junior Historical Society is a statewide membership organization that encourages students to become active participants in the history of their community, region and state. The organization operates through a network of chapters, usually organized at the school level with a teacher serving as sponsor.

Membership benefits include free admission to state historic sites, the "Timeline" newsletter and a student magazine, "Kentucky Heritage." Regional rallies are held at historic sites around the state each fall, and an annual convention is held in Frankfort each spring.

National History Day is a year-long educational program. It engages students in grades 6-12 in the process of discovery and interpretation of historical topics. Students produce dramatic performances, exhibits, multimedia documentaries and research papers based on topics related to an annual theme. The student projects compete at regional, state and national levels.

On the Web: www.history.ky.gov and click on "Teachers & Students."

Contact: Carrie Dowdy, (502) 564-1792, Carrie.Dowdy@mail.state.ky.us



Photo by Rick McComb

Making the right career move

Amanda Stocker gets directions from Tiffany Hyatt and Melissa Taylor during the carpet maze contest at last spring's Jobs for Kentucky Graduates Career Development Competition. Jobs for Kentucky Graduates is a dropout-prevention, school-based program that helps students focus on attaining their high school diplomas and pursuing postsecondary education or training that will lead to success in their chosen career field.

Youth summit studies transportation issues

Transportation, Growth and the Environment is the topic for the 2004 Kentucky Youth Environmental Summit. The summit, scheduled March 21-22 in Louisville gives high school students the opportunity to learn how their communities grow and how an informed citizen's participation in community planning can foster economic development, promote a sense of community, and ensure a clean and healthy environment.

The Youth Environmental Summit Task Force is offering free curricula and

training this fall for teachers who are interested in preparing their students for the summit. The task force also will cover conference costs for teachers and students to attend the summit.

Teachers and their students can use materials provided by the council to study their own communities. Activities and concepts in the curriculum address many high school content standards and goals, such as fostering inquiry-based learning and using appropriate technology.

During the conference, students will mod-

erate all sessions. They will make presentations about their own communities and offer their visions for addressing local issues of transportation as they relate to land use, human health, environmental quality and historic properties. Students will meet for small group discussions with other students and participating adults. They also will have opportunities to visit sites in the Louisville area that relate to transportation, growth and the environment.

Contact: Kentucky Environmental Education Council, (800) 882-5271

Old Fort Harrod offers a blast from the past

A glimpse of life on the Kentucky frontier is as close for students as a visit to Old Fort Harrod State Park. The park, located in Harrodsburg, is Kentucky's first permanent settlement. The park schedules school field trips year-round. Costumed interpreters are at the park from mid-April through Oct. 31. Fort and Mansion Museum tours are \$1.50 per student in groups of 20 or more.

In addition to tours of the fort, students can get involved in "Frontier Tales," a 35-minute interactive performance based on original narratives, folk tales and songs that depict the early history of Kentucky.

"Frontier Tales" connects to Kentucky's core content and is best suited for students in grades 3-5. Performances continue this fall through Oct. 24. The \$6 per student fee includes admission to the performance, Old Fort Harrod State Park and the Mansion Museum.

Classes that can't travel to the fort can invite historical figures such as Daniel Boone, Jane Coomes, Kentucky's first schoolteacher, and Abraham Lincoln into their schools. Professional actors in period costumes talk with students and answer questions about their lives and Kentucky history during a 35-minute

"History Alive!" presentation. Performances are scheduled from August through June. Fees begin at \$250, depending on the length of the performance and location of the school.

Teachers who participate in "Frontier Tales" or "History Alive!" can request study guides for performances or the fort tour.

To schedule groups to Old Fort Harrod State Park call (859) 734-9614 or go to www.oldfortharrod.com on the Internet and click on School Tours. To schedule groups for "Frontier Tales" or "History Alive!" performances, call toll free (800) 852-6663.

NEED connects energy to the classroom

The word “energy” appears 65 times in the Kentucky Core Content for Assessment in science — not counting references to light, electricity, heat or natural resources. How can teachers best teach their students about energy?

Four years ago Kim Jenkins, a 7th-grade science teacher at Harrison County Middle School, attended the Kentucky Science Teacher Association conference looking for an answer to that question. She found her answer at a session presented by the Kentucky NEED Project, the state affiliate of the National Energy Education Development Project.

Jenkins started using NEED

Project materials in her classroom and now reports that her school’s physical science scores on the state’s assessments have gone from being their lowest-scoring subject to their highest. Now, all the district’s 4th- and 7th-grade teachers use NEED Project materials, as do several of the district’s primary teachers.

What is NEED?

The NEED Project is part of a nonprofit educational endeavor that promotes the understanding of the scientific, economic and environmental impacts of energy. NEED produces a P-12 energy curriculum that includes hands-on kits, evaluation tools, professional development for teachers,

and opportunities for state and national recognition.

NEED combines scientific data with hands-on activities, like using an apple to demonstrate energy transformations, to address the diverse learning styles of students.

Assessments are incorporated into the materials in traditional and creative ways, including student presentations, skits, chants, energy carnivals and energy fairs. Harrison County’s Jenkins applauds the continuous assessment components.

“I hate to do an activity, get to the end and (wonder if my students knew what we had done),” she said. “With NEED, I am sure I can assess enough times throughout the program to know that students are not only able to do it — they are ‘getting it!’ They can tell me what they have learned. It is hands-on and minds-on. I still have high school students who come back and say ‘falling water, hydropower, hydropower,’ a chant they learned when we were studying the sources of energy!”

NEED and Core Content

Kentucky’s Core Content for Assessment in science emphasizes energy in grades 4, 7 and 11 — the grades at which stu-



Harrison Middle School 8th-grader Sheldon Burton works on a model house he helped build as part of an energy project. Burton and other students in Kim Jenkins’ science class calculated how much money could be saved over a 10-year period using different qualities of insulation.

dents take the state core content tests in science. NEED’s “Energy Works” kit covers all the core content elements: motion, inertia, gravity and friction.

“Energy tends to be a somewhat abstract concept, especially for younger students,” said Karen Kidwell Malphrus, science consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education. “The strategies used in the NEED program address the developmental needs of the students and seek to make the concepts more concrete. I also appreciate the ‘real world con-

nection’ that is inherent in the materials!”

The national NEED Web site is www.need.org. Correlations between the NEED curriculum and Kentucky’s Academic Expectations and the Program of Studies are available at www.need.org/states/kentucky. Correlations between NEED curriculum and National Science Education Content Standards are at www.need.org/guides.htm.

Contact: Karen Reagor, NEED executive director, (866) 736-8941, kreagor@need.org.

Need NEED?

The first step in connecting NEED to your classroom is to attend a Kentucky NEED teacher training workshop. These workshops are available throughout the state during the fall of each school year.

Participating teachers may bring up to five students to the workshop. This gives teachers an opportunity to see how students respond to the materials and allows students to become peer leaders when they return to the classroom. Teachers and students attend NEED workshops free of charge. Each participating teacher receives a set of NEED classroom materials and additional energy resources.

Interested in scheduling a workshop in your area? Contact the Kentucky NEED office toll free at (866) 736-8941 or send e-mail to Karen Reagor at kreagor@need.org.

Read & Discuss

Steering the Craft: Exercises and Discussions on Story Writing for the Lone Navigator or the Mutinous Crew

By Ursula K. LeGuin

Most professional books for teachers have been written by college professors, many who have been out of the classroom for a long time — if they ever were in a classroom. A professional book written by an author who actually writes and gets paid for it is very interesting to me.

Horror writer Stephen King’s book on writing was most enlightening, but Ursula LeGuin’s book is even better. This science fiction and fantasy novelist offers the reader exercises to perform in which you will learn a lot about yourself as a writer as well as the craft in general.

LeGuin begins by explaining that artists such as musicians, painters and dancers have always had groups to work with in order to perfect their craft, but writers’ groups are relatively new. She’s written the book as a result of a workshop she conducted. “I’ve been meeting a good many workshop writers who were afraid of semicolons and didn’t know a Point of View from a Scenic Vista,” she explained.

Topics in her book are similar to what we teach in our classrooms: the sound of language; punctuation, syntax, the narra-

tive sentence and paragraph; rhythm and repetition; adjectives and adverbs; tense and person of the verb; voice and point of view; implicit narration: imparting information, and crowding, leaping focus and control. LeGuin’s take on these issues is so much more creative than our textbooks or even professional books.

For example, in the chapter on punctuation, she begins this way: “the poet Carolyn Kizer said to me recently, ‘Poets are interested mostly in death and commas,’ and I agreed. Now I add: Prose writers are interested mostly in life and commas.”

I particularly liked the exercises that accompanied each topic. In the punctuation chapter, the exercise was called “I am Garcia Marques” (a reference to a bit of writing she had used as an example of good writing). She suggests that the reader “write a paragraph to a page (150-350 words) of narrative with no punctuation (and no paragraphs or other breaking devices).” She gives you suggested topics and ideas for critiquing your own writing piece or ideas for groups that are working on the book together. She suggests that

you always put your writing aside for a week before returning to it to allow the ideas to mellow.

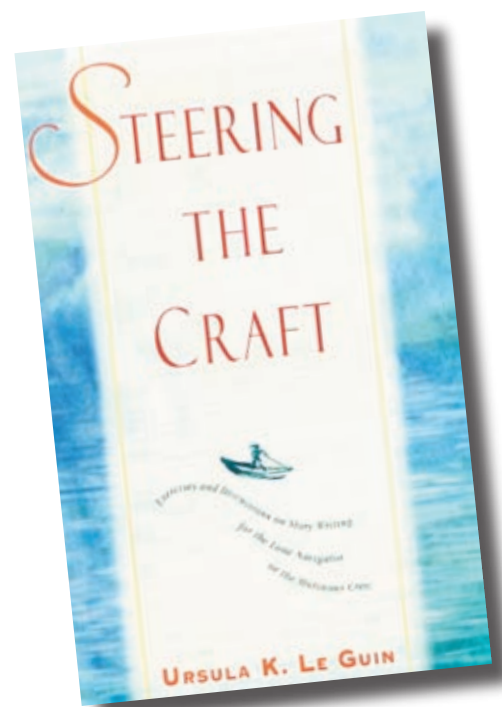
Another chapter, “Sentence Length and Complex Syntax,” contains an exercise that calls for writing “a paragraph of narrative, 100-150 words, in sentences of seven or fewer words. No sentence fragments. Each must have a subject and a verb.”

Another thing I really like about this book is that LeGuin uses examples of the best writing from classic authors: Virginia Woolf, Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Charles Dickens, Alice Walker, Shakespeare and many others. Often these passages were from works I had not read, but now I have them on my reading list.

I highly recommend this book for anyone who has personal aspirations to be a published writer and for anyone who teaches writing. It’s informative, enlightening and fun. You hardly feel as if you are reading a professional book. I like that.

Linda Satterlee-McFadin, a teacher at Western Middle School in Jefferson

County, reviewed this book. She read this book earlier this year as part of a Louisville Writing Project, Gamma Cohort class at the University of Louisville.



Teachers can have fun with economics

By Mollie McClure
Kentucky Council
on Economic Education

"Is there time to fit anything else into my class schedule? And even if there were - how would I do it? Last but not least, do I have to - is it 'on the test?'"

Even when that "anything else" is consumer education and economics, some teachers still may be tempted to throw up their hands and cry "Uncle." However, giving up is not the answer: Consumer education and economics are a vital assessment component in the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System.

Another, even more important reason for teaching consumer education and economics is to prepare students for adult life. Like students all over the world, Kentucky young people will face "financial fitness tests" long after they've left the classroom.

There is no specific economics course required for graduation in Kentucky. However, economics content must be integrated into social studies courses, and teachers must find ways to infuse economics and consumer education content across the curriculum. How can teachers find the tools, time and know-how to do that?

Seventeen Kentucky teachers discovered the answer - and more - when they attended a graduate course sponsored last summer by the Kentucky Council on Economic Education (KCEE). "EDC Problems in the School Curriculum: Economic Education" is part of the Master's coursework in Rank 1.

Instead of taking the entire summer off, these classroom teachers hit the books at the University of Kentucky. Like their peers at the seven other locations where KCEE supports teacher training and orientation to economics, these teach-

ers learned to introduce and integrate the basic elements of economics into their courses. In addition, they gathered real-life "tools" that they could carry back to their classrooms. In other words, they were increasing their most precious commodity - time.

According to Mary Ann Farley Vimont, director of the UK Center for Economics, one of the first steps to accomplishing KCEE's goal is to increase teachers' awareness of the large amount of available resources. "Kentucky Council on Economic Education offers some wonderful tools - developed by teachers, for teachers," Vimont explained. "We want to make sure teachers know where to look for them." Vimont also is an associate professor at UK's College of Education.

Practice makes perfect, even at the graduate level, and teach-

ers at the summer program got lots of practice using economics education resources and materials. Vimont, who developed the UK course, gave teachers their first assignment: search the university library and select three resources they could use in their classes. Teachers found resources for all grade levels on a variety of economics concepts:

- Pocketwise (K-2) - offers lessons on topics such as how people get, spend and save money
- \$mart \$pending & \$aving (Grades 3-5) - includes a board game illustrating the advantages of budgeting and the perils of poor money management
- Entrepreneurs in Kentucky (versions covering grades 3-12) - provides information about familiar Kentucky economic concepts and people

The summer course isn't just about books and homework. Guest speakers Janice Duncan, a teacher at Stonewall Elementary (Fayette County) and Janie Cottrell, project manager for Fayette County's Experience Based Career Education program, helped the teachers discover a number of ways to "keep it real" once they return to their classrooms.

Duncan "taught by example" using a game, "Economic Loop," to introduce economic concepts. She read a storybook, "When the Bees Fly Home," by economist Andrea Cheng, to teach connections between economics and honey production. Duncan's point: By integrating economics into other, more traditional teaching methods and subjects, it's not only possible to find the time to work consumer education into the curriculum, it's down-

right easy.

Cottrell, who has been involved in entrepreneurial projects for both Florida and Kentucky high school students, supported Duncan's message. "It's important to determine if students have a solid background in economics by the time they reach high school," Cottrell said. If students do not, her advice is to use resources like KCEE's "Economics and Me." This story of four children, an invisible friend and real-life economic problems teaches basic economic concepts such as scarcity, opportunity cost, consumption and production.

"Give (older) students the basics before moving on to use high school resources," Cottrell advised.

Kay Pickrell, a Bourbon County Family and Consumer Science teacher, encourages the use of hands-on, real-world methods in teaching economics and consumer education. "Your students will thank you for it," she said. "Some see it as a way to succeed where other, more traditional ways have failed. After graduation, many students see it as one of the most valuable experiences they had in school."

Definitely worth the time, right?

For more information about KCEE's summer graduate courses or the center's fall professional development schedule, go to www.econ.org or phone toll free (800) I-DO-ECON (436-3266).

(Mollie McClure is a former high school English, journalism and creative writing teacher. She is a contributing writer for *The Lexington Herald-Leader* and prepared this story on behalf of the Kentucky Council on Economic Education. Contact her at redhatcreative@aol.com.)



Janice Duncan, 5th-grade teacher at Fayette County's Stonewall Elementary, makes studying economics fun as she helps students Jason Ferguson and Lizzie Hendrix solve a puzzle.

Using literature to teach economics

By Janice Duncan
Stonewall Elementary School

Integration is definitely the key to "covering" all the economics content that is required for your grade level. In addition, economics is an easy social studies topic to integrate. One of the easiest ways to do this is with the use of literature.

For example, you might read the book "When the Bees Fly Home" by Andrea Cheng to your class. This book describes the life of Jonathan,

a little boy whose father is a beekeeper. There is a drought, and the family has a "scarcity" of money.

Jonathan is different than his athletic brother. Jonathan's creativity and artistic talents bring his family much-needed money, as well as the key that brings the family closer together.

Using this book, you can introduce terms such as scarcity, surplus, economic decision making, opportunity cost, consumer, producer and specialization of labor. It also would be an appropriate

time to have students design advertisements that Jonathan might use for the products he sells.

Once you start "looking" for economics in children's books, you'll be amazed at how many in your classroom library have economic ideas. In addition, there are many great resources already available for teaching economics. Take a look at the many materials available from the Kentucky Council on Economic Education. You will find that integrating economics is easy!

Janice Duncan is a 5th-grade teacher at Stonewall Elementary in Fayette County. In addition, she is a part-time instructor for the University of Kentucky, co-director of the Kentucky Reading Project housed at Kentucky State University and a consultant for the Kentucky Council on Economic Education.

Contact: Janice Duncan, (859) 381-3079, jduncan@fayette.k12.ky.us



Art teacher Sonya Dalton puts the final few ceramic tiles designed by students in place to complete a mural that is on permanent display at River Ridge Elementary in Kenton County.

River Ridge students imitate famous artist in ceramics

By Teresa Wilkins
Kenton County Schools

Students at River Ridge Elementary in Kenton County view themselves as artists. Together they designed and painted a mural that is now permanently displayed at the school.

Sonya Dalton, art teacher at River Ridge, worked closely with the classroom teachers integrating core content for art into all subjects. This collaborative approach was essential for making arts education accessible to each student. "Because of the limited time I am able to spend with our children – about 40 minutes per week – and because the visual arts core content is so vast, every project we do relates directly to the mandated core content," said Dalton.

"A few years ago, I divided the core content and visual arts program of studies into six age-appropriate levels (K-5), with each level addressing concepts appropriate for that particular grade," Dalton explained. "This past year, I worked to formulate a curriculum map that outlined the specific topics and projects that address each of the core content and Program of Studies components that needed to be taught."

Projects are adapted and changed from year to year. However, every project always ties back to the basic curriculum map that spells out the required curriculum for each grade level, according to Dalton.

Kathy Brown, principal at River

Ridge, believes that the culture of the school has changed because of the arts integration. "The teachers see the products their students produce in art class and the terminology they use," said Brown. Plus the classroom teachers know the art core content and assume the responsibility to teach it.

"Part of my vision for the school was for the art program to have an annual art show where students could display and share their accomplishments. This year's (spring 2003) art show surpassed my dreams," said Brown.

The Parent Teacher Organization at the school is very supportive of the art program and purchased a kiln. "We wanted the first ceramics project to involve our entire school and to raise excitement among the children about clay projects undertaken in years to come," said Dalton.

The students embarked upon a project to inaugurate the kiln. They designed and painted an abstract mural in the spirit of Russian artist, Wassily Kandinsky. This collaborative artwork represented the touch of every student.

During an all-day adventure in the school's gym, students came by grade level to add various shapes to the tiles. During five, 40-minute periods, small groups of students worked on a section of six to 12 tiles. More than 30 parent volunteers guided the students in adding the following segments to create the masterpiece:

- 1st grade – giant triangles
- 2nd grade – circles

- 3rd grade – one organic/free-form shape
- 4th grade – one linear shape
- 5th grade – one additional organic shape and the 'Kandinsky stylized black lines'

Last spring, more than 400 art show attendees watched the young artists unveil the mural. Other visual representations of student work were displayed at the show: collages, paper weavings, landscape drawings, art history posters, ethnic art and self-portraits.

"I sometimes question myself as an educator by wondering whether my expectations for elementary students are too high. However, without failure, the students have risen to the task every time," said Dalton. Providing students with clearly defined expectations before beginning a project has dramatically increased student achievement, according to Dalton. Students are able to evaluate their own level of success by reviewing the criteria before ever handing in the work for teacher evaluation.

"I design art projects for the students that focus on practice and implementation of the elements and principles of design. These projects often are abstract pieces in which students on the elementary level feel more successful because the focus remains on design instead of achieving realism," said Dalton.

Contact: Sonya Dalton, (859) 341-5260, sdalton@kenton.k12.ky.us
(Kathy Brown and Sonya Dalton also contributed to this story.)

Writing workshops help students prepare for contest

Middle and high school teachers in six Northern Kentucky counties are helping their students prepare for a new writing competition in Boone, Campbell, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton and Pendleton counties. The Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts Inc. and Northern Kentucky University are sponsoring the Northern Kentucky Region of The Scholastic Writing Awards. The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards are the largest, longest-running recognition program for creative young people in this country.

Teachers and school administrators in these counties are working with students during a series of writing workshops that began in September and continue into the fall semester. The workshops help teachers and students become more familiar with many of the writing forms used in Kentucky's writing portfolios, as well as journalistic, script, novel and short story writing.

Entries in the Northern Kentucky Regional competition will be judged in two categories: Grades 7-9 and Grades 10-12. Students will compete first at the school level. The top 5 percent of writing from each school will advance to the regional competition. Regional winners will compete in the national Scholastic Writing Awards.

Contact: Kerry Conrad, (859) 654-4627, pr@kcte.org

NASA and KET offer free distance learning program

The NASA Center for Distance Learning and Kentucky Educational Television (KET) are offering the award-winning multimedia distance learning program series NASA CONNECT to schools this fall. The series connects mathematics, science and technology concepts taught in Kentucky classrooms with those used every day by NASA researchers.

NASA CONNECT is a series of mathematics-focused TV and Web-based programs for students in grades 4-8. The series includes instructional broadcasts, a lesson guide and an interactive Web-based application. Learn more about the program at <http://connect.larc.nasa.gov>.

KET is providing a block-free of the series free of charge on KET 3/Star Channel 703. Schools have unlimited taping and use rights to the programs and will receive a printed curriculum guide and suggestions for Web-based activities.

NASA CONNECT programs began Sept. 2 and continue through Dec. 2. The schedule is available on the KET Web page: www.ket.org/itvvideos/offering/science/nasaconnect.htm

Contact: Thomas E. Pinelli, t.e.pinelli@larc.nasa.gov or Kathy Quinn, (859) 258-7260, kquinn@mail.ket.org

For all to see

Leslie Williams solves an expanded notations mathematics problem on the overhead projector to show her work to her primary classmates at Paris Elementary (Paris Independent).



Photo by Rick McComb

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mathematics core content. After researching for high-quality information and ideas, my students in 2002-2003 experienced mathematics units that incorporated concrete manipulatives, journaling, problem solving, glyphs, a math vocabulary word wall, WebQuests, technology, "Buddy Math" (a cooperative learning strategy) and performance-based assessments.

Throughout the year my students were excited about mathematics, and I was equally enthusiastic about teaching it. For example, to teach mathematics concepts, I guided my second-year primary class to do these things:

- read mathematics literature
- assemble themselves into a human clock
- make a class book titled "Things We Do During the Day"
- design a new coin for the U.S. Mint
- solve the Problem of the Day

To teach mathematics skills, students and I did these things:

- used geo boards to construct geometric shapes
- created "I have . . . Who has . . ." mathematics games
- used the SMART Board to play mathematics games on the Web
- learned from each other through "Buddy Math" activities
- used spaghetti to create open and closed numbers and figures

To teach mathematics relationships, I did these things:

- used food and pictures of food to distinguish between 2-D and 3-D shapes
- invited a county Homemaker Club member to share the geometry used in quilt making
- invited a local bank teller to share the importance of addition and subtraction

Early Childhood Development takes its place in Department of Education

Another piece of Kentucky's education puzzle moved into place this summer. The Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development joined the Kentucky Department of Education as the Division of Early Childhood Development.

The move enables Kentucky to better coordinate education activities from birth through high school graduation. "It makes a great deal of sense," said Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit, "since the department's preschool staff traditionally has worked very closely with this office to make sure children are arriving at the primary grades ready to learn."

KIDS NOW (Kentucky Invests in Developing Success NOW) is Kentucky's early childhood development program. It focuses on prenatal and postnatal care, child health care and screening, quality early child care and education, parent education, family literacy skills, well-designed preschool programs and other education initiatives that enable school and personal success for children ages birth through five.

KIDS NOW seeks to support the environments in which Kentucky's youngest citizens spend time. Research demonstrates that positive, stimulating environments foster brain development and increase the potential for success in school and in life.

One of the 17 component parts of KIDS NOW is STARS for KIDS NOW, which provides a voluntary rating system that parents can use as a consumer tool when selecting early child care and education programs for their children. A scholarship program, administered by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority, offers scholarships for early care and education professionals who are pursuing postsecondary studies in early childhood education.

"Research shows that 90 percent of architectural structure of the brain is built in the first three years of a child's life," said Kim Townley, early childhood development acting division director. "Our programs are designed to support programs, agencies and families to provide quality environments in which young children will thrive and meet developmental milestones, so children arrive at preschool and kindergarten ready to take full advantage of formal schooling."

Townley leads a staff of eight employees. The division works closely with a variety of state and local health, education and service providers to ensure that children receive the support they need during their formative first years of life.

On the Web: <http://kidsnow.ky.gov>

Contact: Kim Townley, (502) 564-8341, ktownley@kde.state.ky.us

For more information . . .

Contact: Kim Downs, (270) 384-3367, kdowns@adair.k12.ky.us.

Contact: CEO Program, www.kyepsb.net (Click on "Professional Learning and Assessment," then "Continuing Education Option.") For online professional development:

www.kyeducators.org. Contact: Kentucky education co-ops for CEO cohorts, www.kentuckyschools.org and select "Partners."

Contact: Sandra Barnett, (502) 564-2106, sbarnett@kde.state.ky.us for information about the Teach-

ers Professional Growth Fund, which offers of financial assistance for rank change activities or visit www.kentuckyschools.org and enter "#TPGF" in the keyword/search box.

Contact: Kentucky Council of Teachers of Mathematics, www.kctm.org

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throughout their school day," said Jennifer Bernhard, a language arts teacher at Conkwright Middle School (Clark County) who is featured in the project. Bernhard currently serves as the middle school writing consultant at the Kentucky Department of Education.

MRSIA was created to use with small groups gathered around a computer. It can be used on its own or as a follow-up to "Reading Strategies in Action."

"As a classroom teacher, I would appreciate the opportunity to examine MRSIA with

a group of fellow teachers so that, through discussion, we could reach a consensus on those strategies we want to adopt and adapt for our own classrooms," Bernhard said.

Information on the CD-ROM set is organized by content area and by reading strategies. The four content areas, English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, are on separate disks. The 11 types of reading strategies presented throughout are: activate prior knowledge, ask questions, make connections, make predic-

tions, monitor comprehension, read in groups, reflect on reading, summarize, take notes, understand vocabulary and use text features.

The strategies, however, are not exclusive to a particular content area. For example, an English or science teacher also could use the strategy a social studies teacher uses. Video clips are cross-referenced by content area and reading strategy to enable users to see excellent practice in all four content areas.

A "Getting Started" CD provides a guide

to the contents of each disk. Printable versions of a glossary, bibliography and a guide to effectively using MRSIA in study group, in department/content team and as an individual are on the disk.

A copy MRSIA will be sent to every Kentucky middle and high school in October. The disk set is provided by the Kentucky Department of Education and produced by Kentucky Educational Television.

Contact: Rene Matthews, department literacy consultant, (502) 564-2106, rmatthew@kde.state.ky.us

LAWMAKERS

from Page 1

CATS scores have been increasing while statewide ACT scores have remained flat.

The legislative report found a comparatively strong correlation between individual students' CATS and ACT scores. However, according to the report, the difference in statewide scores may be due to the larger number of "novice" students taking the ACT.

Another key issue discussed in the report is the lack of verification in drop-out data received from schools. As a result, the committee asked the state auditor to investigate whether schools are underreporting Kentucky's 3.97 percent dropout rate.

The Kentucky Department of Education made the following responses to the legislative committee's recommendations:

Recommendation

Implement a uniform student information system at the state level to track students who transfer, drop out, are expelled or graduate, and to keep track of the number of students who are excluded from the CATS tests.

Response

The department will field test the secure student identifier system in December and anticipates implementation of the state data system in the 2004-2005 school year.

Recommendation

Review the schools' documentation that students coded as transfers are enrolled in another school and consider sanctioning schools that underreport statistics by lowering their scores on the accountability index by an additional amount or by making them ineligible for rewards that year.

Response

With the implementation of the student tracking system, the department will be able to verify student transfers within the state. The system does not have the capacity to electronically track out-of-state transfers, except to note when a transcript is requested.

The department currently reviews student withdrawal information as part of the attendance audit process. Within this process, staff verifies the use of the appropriate withdrawal code in the tracking system. Updates to the system and appropriate changes to audit procedures will be made.

Two sanctions already are in place to control misreporting by schools and districts. When errors in the nonacademic data are identified, corrections to the school's CATS data are made. An intentional error violates state law and calls for the district to consider disciplinary action and to report the violation to the Educational Professional Standards Board.

Recommendation

Create a CATS testing expenditure category in the school finance accounting system (MUNIS) and encourage school districts to utilize this category for all CATS administrative expenses.

Response

The department will create a CATS expenditure sub-code in the MUNIS system, and school and district personnel will be trained to use it.

Recommendation

Reduce the practice of teachers scoring their own students' portfolios.

Response

One of the department's current options, double-blind scoring, provides a means for the teacher of record to assess and assist students. This helps to alleviate the impact of scorer bias because no one scorer is involved in the process. Scores of record are determined by agreement. This study indicates that approximately 85 percent of Kentucky schools already use this option.

The department will survey cluster leaders to determine methods used by schools to alleviate the concern of a teacher scoring his or her own students' writing portfolios. This information will then be shared with all cluster leaders.

Recommendation

Survey teachers to determine how portfolio scoring training can be improved.

Response

The department will survey teachers to gather suggested improvements to portfolio scoring training. The Kentucky Writing Advisory Committee and the Kentucky Board of Education would take changes under advisement.

Recommendation

Regularly replace benchmark portfolios with new samples available to teachers.

Response

Maintaining the benchmarks helps Kentucky teachers understand writing standards. The repetition helps scorers anchor the language of the performance cells on the scoring guide. Current benchmarks need to remain a consistent component of the portfolio assessment.

Additional portfolios will be released annually to assist with scoring and instruction.

Recommendation

Provide teachers with more opportunities to practice scoring writing portfolios.

Response

The department will provide quality control portfolios for scoring practice and will offer scoring verification sessions throughout the state for teachers to determine their own scoring accuracy.

The department will suggest methods for cluster leaders to offer scoring practice throughout the year and will explore electronic practice opportunities.

Recommendation

Track the performance of portfolio scorers.

Response

The department will review the use of record-keeping forms with all cluster leaders and will develop questions to assist with scoring accuracy research. Significant findings will be presented to the Kentucky Writing Advisory Committee. Suggested modifications will be shared with all cluster leaders.

Recommendation

Establish consequences for schools that have low portfolio audit agreement rates.

Response

Applying the "final audit" score is often considered a serious consequence by audited schools, and teachers typically view the audit experience as embarrassing. If the "inaccurate scoring" is intentional or appropriate training was not provided, the "Administration Code" provisions apply.

Although writing portfolio scores may be adjusted during the writing portfolio audit, the department views the audit as a means to support schools and inform them of instructional and assessment needs.

Consequently, decisions on punitive measures will be postponed until all other areas have been addressed and schools have had an opportunity to respond.

Recommendation

Consider re-auditing schools that had a high number of scoring inaccuracies the prior year.

Response

The department will discuss the recommendation with the panel of national testing experts. Based on the selection procedure, schools can be audited in consecutive years. Data indicate that schools often improve writing instruction and scoring accuracy during the second audited year.

Recommendation

Consider increasing the number of schools randomly selected for writing portfolio audits.

Response

As of the 2002-2003 Writing Portfolio Audit, 80 percent of audited schools are randomly selected.

A follow-up of the legislative study will be conducted next year to verify the department's progress on the implementation of the committee's recommendations.

A copy of the report will be available on the Legislative Research Commission's web site (www.lrc.state.ky.us/lrcpubs/research_reports.htm) in January 2004.



Photo by Rick McComb

Outdoor classroom

Fourth-grade teacher Amy Brown and students Dillon Lynch, Aaron Jacobs and Shawn Crain work on lessons and enjoy a sunny fall day on the front steps of Paris Elementary School.

Leadership Letter

Compiled by Joy Barr
jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

KVLN: Your online training connection

Superintendents and principals now have access to an efficient and effective means of leadership development through the Kentucky Virtual Leadership Network (KVLN). The KVLN provides a selection of online leadership development training modules in a format similar to that of the Kentucky Virtual High School.

Each participant will receive \$550 to apply toward the purchase of a form of technology that will assist in his or her participation in the training.

Funded through the Gates Foundation and coordinated by the Kentucky Department of Education, this network is provided free of charge. Registration is available on the KVLN Web site. Superintendents may register themselves or their principals as participants by district.

On the Web: www.kentuckyschools.org then enter #KVLN in the keyword/search box.

Contact: Brenda Hauser, (502) 564-4201, bhauser@kde.state.ky.us

Online application for training refund

Fifth- through 8th-grade teachers can apply online to receive funds from the Teachers Professional Growth Fund (TPGF). The fund reimburses teachers for completing courses and training in their content area. Approximately \$4 million has been reimbursed to teachers in the four years the program has been funded by the legislature.

A teacher can submit the completed online form, and the school principal can approve it online.

On the Web: www.kentuckyschools.org then enter #TPGF in the keyword/search box.

Contact: Brenda Withrow, (502) 564-2106, bwithrow@kde.state.ky.us

Standardizing school data

All 176 Kentucky school districts are attempting to standardize Software Technology Inc. (STI) data elements. This standardization will help meet federal and state policy requirements while reducing the reporting burden on local school districts.

In the near future, districts will not be required to submit separate report files to the Kentucky Department of Education. The information will be pulled from district data that has been aggregated at the state level.

On the Web: www.kentuckyschools.org then enter #STI in the keyword/search box.

Contact: Michele Kays, (502) 564-5279, mkays@kde.state.ky.us



Photo by Rick McComb

Leadership by example

Woodford County High School Principal Sam Watkins assists senior Mary Beth Adkisson with an assignment. Watkins was recognized as 2003 Principal of the Year by the Kentucky Association of Secondary School Principals and the Kentucky School Counselor Association for his school leadership and rapport with students.

Teacher of the Year program deadline is Oct. 15

The Kentucky Department of Education and Ashland Inc. are seeking exemplary teachers through the 2004 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Program. Teachers may complete the application by retrieving it online or at a local school or school district. Teachers who are nominated will receive a copy of the application via mail or e-mail.

The 2004 Teacher of the Year Program highlights include:

- Open participation for any Kentucky teacher with three years of experience.
- The selection of 24 regional candidates who will receive Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards of \$500.
- The selection of an elementary, middle and high school Teacher of the Year, one of whom will be named the 2004

Kentucky Teacher of the Year.

- A cash gift of \$10,000 (provided by Ashland Inc.) and a professional development/sabbatical opportunity sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Education for the 2004 Kentucky Teacher of the Year.
 - A cash gift of \$2,500 (provided by Ashland Inc.) for the two finalists.
 - A luncheon in honor of the 24 Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Award winners.
- The deadline for completed applications is Oct. 15.

On the Web: www.kentuckyschools.org then enter #TOY in the keyword/search box.

Contact: Donna Melton, (502) 564-1479, dmelton@kde.state.ky.us

Online assessment for paraeducators

The Kentucky Department of Education has developed the Kentucky Paraeducator Assessment (KPA) as a means of assessing paraeducators – uncertified staff members who assist with instruction – who do not meet the new higher education requirements under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

A school district must use the state assessment unless the district has submitted the Alternative Paraeducator Assessment Certification to the department certifying that the district will use a locally developed or selected assessment that meets all of the criteria listed in the document.

Paraeducators hired after Jan. 8, 2002, to work in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds and whose duties include instructional support, must meet one of the NCLB requirements. Additionally, paraeducators hired on or before Jan. 8, 2002, who work in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds and whose duties include instructional support must meet one of the NCLB requirements by Jan. 8, 2006.

To provide consistency and ensure that all paraeducators are highly qualified, districts may choose to develop a policy in which all paraeducators with instructional duties are required to meet one of the NCLB requirements. These requirements are:

- Completed two years of study at an institution of higher education (In Kentucky, this means 48 undergraduate hours)
- Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree
- Met a rigorous standard of quality and able to demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instruction of reading, writing and mathematics.

NCLB includes higher standards to ensure that students who need the most help are assisted by highly qualified paraeducators. The law also requires that high-quality and ongoing professional development be provided for paraeducators working in programs supported by Title I, Part A funds.

The training should enable paraeducators to assist children in meeting the state's student academic achievement standards.

Contact: Diane Robertson, (502) 564-3791, droberts@kde.state.ky.us

Safe at school

Woodford County High creates a more secure environment for students

By Joy Barr

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Creating and nurturing a positive and safe learning environment for all students to be successful learners is a lofty mission for any school. However, Woodford County High School in Versailles is undertaking several measures to help ensure a safe and inviting school for its students and students throughout the country.

Woodford County High is one of only two schools in the United States selected for a pilot project, funded by the National Crime Prevention Council, to try out a comprehensive new school-security program aimed at preventing violence.

The school district has a Safe Schools Plan designed to improve safety and discipline within the public schools. Cameras are installed, and entrances to buildings and hallways are monitored. Students carry clear or mesh backpacks. Except for front lobby doors, exterior doors remain locked from outside at all times. In-school resource officers also are available.

"We want our students to feel

safe at school," said Sam Watkins, principal.

With the grant from the National Crime Prevention Council, Woodford County High has taken the district plan a notch higher. "We have a good safety plan in place, but this has given us a chance to get a fresh look at ourselves and see where we can improve," said Katie Boyd, coordinator of student services for Woodford County Schools.

"Kentucky was selected for this national initiative because it was one of the first states to create its own safe-schools center, The Kentucky Center for School Safety," said Watkins. Demographics and school leadership were the primary factors in the selection of the Woodford County school.

The pilot program, "Be Safe and Sound," emphasizes a dual approach. The first is school safety, which includes programs, policies and procedures. The second component is security, which includes physical items such as lights, locks and alarms.

Garet Wells, associate high school principal, said experts

completed an exhaustive security audit at the school. Upgrading video surveillance and improving entryway locks are just some of the safety measures that will be implemented at the school.

"We are also looking at developing student identification cards. They could be used for access to the school building, used for cafeteria charges, used to check out school library books and used for extracurricular activities," said Wells.

"We want to be proactive by creating a positive atmosphere for our students," said Watkins. "It is even more important to build relationships with our students, where they feel comfortable."

Newsletters to both parents and students will help keep everyone informed of safety measures. The school also hosts an 'open forum' twice a semester where the community is invited to talk with school staff about areas of concern.

"Through this process we hope to create enduring lines of communication among all of the players that have a role in keeping our schools safe," said Boyd.

Safe Schools Week

Kentucky's Safe Schools Week, Oct. 19-25, is a time for students, parents, educators and community members to realize that "Safe Schools Begin with Me!" This year's campaign slogan is "Healthy Choices, Healthy Lifestyles."

A free classroom curriculum and activity guide about making healthy choices is available from the Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS) Clearinghouse on the Web (www.kysafeschools.org).

Project Safe Neighborhoods, Newspapers in Education and the Kentucky Broadcasting

Association are some of the partners working with KCSS to encourage awareness of and involvement in Safe Schools Week activities.

A special newspaper supplement that addresses issues such as gun safety, bullying prevention and drug abuse will reach more than 120,000 households and more than 1,500 classrooms in Kentucky.

Posters, essays and a TV commercial were created earlier this year by students for a design competition funded through the Project Safe Neighborhoods partnership. Winning

entries will be used during Safe Schools Week to remind students that they need to prevent school violence, promote gun safety and remember the consequences of drug abuse every day. Details about the 2004 design competition will be posted in January on the Web sites listed below.

Partnerships with youth-led organizations are also vital to Safe Schools Week.

On the Web: www.kysafeschools.org and kypsn.uky.edu

Contact: the Kentucky Center for School Safety Clearinghouse, (877) 805-4277

Learn more about this school safety program

- The National Crime Prevention Council
On the Web: www.ncpc.org/ – Contact: (202) 261-4160
- Kentucky Center for School Safety
On the Web: www.kysafeschools.org/ – Contact: (877) 805-4277
- Woodford County High School
Contact: Sam Watkins, (859) 873-5434, swatkins@woodford.k12.ky.us or Garet Wells, gwells@woodford.k12.ky.us.